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Summer Seasonal Tips from Environmental Services!

The sights and sounds of summer include cutting the grass, neighbors working on their lawns, friends having picnics and soaking up the sun. If you're having a picnic or party, don't forget the 4Rs:

REDUCE the volume of trash created – buy bulk food items to reduce packaging.

REUSE materials - use plates, glasses, napkins, dinnerware and tablecloths that may be washed and reused (your guests will be surprised and honored). Many disposable plates, cups and silverware items are durable and can be placed in your dishwasher.

RECYCLE as much as possible – place picnic recyclables in your blue recycling container or set marked see-through bags throughout the yard that your guests can identify.

RESPOND by thinking about the environment when you shop and set an example for others! Encourage guests to recycle at your picnic. Tell people where to place empty plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass bottles and jars.

GRASSCYCLING



Cutting the grass is a part of everyone's summer chores, but to save time, energy and the environment, try **GrassCycling** - by leaving the grass clippings on your lawn to recycle naturally. Grasscycling is a gentle way to release nitrogen gradually on to your lawn. It also saves you from bagging and

dragging your grass clippings to the curb for pickup. Yard trim is Recyclable too!

Trimming your hedges? Pulling out weeds or cutting small limbs off your trees? Wondering what other nature's treasures can be collected in our curbside recycling program? Visit Howardcountymd.gov/YardTrim.htm for more information on what can be set out with your curbside recycling.

Recycled Art at Summer Camps!

Our summer camps will be creating works of art from your shared reusable items. Please place your contributions in the box outside of Holly Harden's office at Headquarters. Thanks in advance for your assistance. Below is a list of items we are collecting for camps.

- Plastic water/soda bottles (all sizes)
- Towel & toilet paper rolls
- Circular cardboard containers (oatmeal, stuffing)
- Egg cartons
- Bubble wrap
- Marbles
- Combs (used for painting)
- Toothbrushes (used for painting)
- Bowls any size
- Magazines
- Cardboard tubes (toilet paper rolls/ paper towel rolls/wrapping paper rolls)
- Tissue boxes (big or small)
- Shoe boxes
- Cereal boxes
- Old buttons
- Small/medium jars
- Fabric



Sustainable Summer Dates!

July 27 National Tree Day
treeday.planetark.org/

August 9 Smokey The Bear's Birthday
www.smokeybear.com/

September 4 National Wildlife Day
www.nationalwildlifeday.com/

September 16 International Ozone Day
www.unep.org/

September 20 International Coastal Cleanup Day
www.oceanconservancy.org/



Waste to Garden: HoCoGro produced at the Alpha Ridge Landfill

In May, the Sustainability Team toured the new state-of-the-art compost project at the Alpha Ridge Landfill. Constructed by the Bureau of Environmental Services, this pilot project is designed to compost yard trim and food scraps in aerated, covered piles. The compostable material is from the approximately 10,000 Howard County households that are participating in a curbside food scrap collection pilot program. This is supplemented by material directly hauled by residents and contractors to Alpha Ridge. The facility started accepting yard trim and food scraps from the pilot curbside program in March 2013.

By working with State and County regulatory agencies, the composting facility meets and exceeds environmental standards and expectations. Benefits include the use of local material, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating a beneficial soil amendment which reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, reduces erosion, and increases water retention in soils. Currently, this is the only facility of its kind in Maryland and several representatives from other Maryland county Environmental Services agencies were also on this tour!

The facility is designed to make mature HoCoGro Compost in 75 days using a process involving covered "piles" in various stages of composting, and a sophisticated aerating blower and biofilter system to ensure proper oxygen levels, heat and odor reduction. The compost is for sale at Alpha Ridge in bulk quantities. For additional information on this project, click here for a [handy fact sheet](#) with information about the new pilot compost facility.

According to a recent Howard County study, 25% of what is sent to the landfill can be composted into a valuable product. Fruit and vegetable scraps, egg shells, pizza boxes, yard trim and more can be set out in the special collection carts, but certain items cannot be accepted (meat, fish and dairy products). Even if you are not a resident in one of the curbside collection zones, you can still start composting at home with valuable tips available at howardcountymd.gov/composting.htm.



The Biofilter treats gasses coming out of the piles to reduce odors.

May's "It Is Easy Being Green" Contest Winners!

In May, the Sustainability Team sent out "Green Secret Agents" to catch people in the act of "going green." We had many submissions and caught people turning their monitors off at the end of each day, bringing reusable containers for their lunch, printing documents double-sided, refilling reusable water bottles and much more!



The winners (who were randomly selected out of all of the submissions) of the "It Is Easy Being Green" Contest are **Freda Greenfield, Dawn Gibson, Nakita Watkins, and Allan Harden**. They will each be awarded a Sustain-a-prize for their efforts to be more green in the workplace. Thank you all for making an effort to be green. **Congratulations winners!**

FUN FACT: Did you Know the University of Maryland is a leader in Sustainability?



The green industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of the US economy with many exciting career opportunities for college graduates. Students can get a foot in the "green jobs" door by working on sustainability initiatives at the University of Maryland, which is recognized as a national leader in campus sustainability. They have both on and off campus opportunities. The UMCP College of Sustainability also has a number of community outreach projects and initiatives. Want to know more? Visit their website <http://www.sustainability.umd.edu/>.



terps leave **small** footprints



Summer: The Season for Bees

The buzz

This summer, look out for buzzing bees – Bumble, Honey, Mason, Digger, Mining and more. Bees come in many different shapes, sizes and behaviors. In fact, there are more than 3,500 species of bees occurring in North America. In spite of their vast diversity, bee populations have been declining. Concern about this decline often focuses on the important ecological service bees provide, namely pollination. Bees are well-adapted to pollinate our plants. Many of our food crops especially benefit from this service.

Making room for bees

One way to help conserve our bee populations is to provide habitat for bees. This does not mean that you have to take up beekeeping and keep

Honeybee hives. Start, instead, by trying to encourage Mason bees to take up residence in your yard. Mason bees are solitary, and as such are more docile, and very unlikely to ever sting. You can purchase pre-fabricated Mason bee houses, or build your own! A quick search online will provide you with plenty of free design and build plans. If you don't get any Mason bees taking up residence this summer, you can order cocoons through the mail and release them next spring.

Bees at Robinson

We are working with bees in a couple of ways at Robinson Nature Center. We began raising Honeybees last year with one observation hive that visitors can see in our Backyard Habitat Exhibit and two support hives kept behind our building. Additionally, we maintain two Mason bee houses in our Backyard Habitat garden space. We are also participating as a site in a Maryland Geological Society study of wild bee populations.

You can learn more about Honeybees, Mason bees, pollinators, and other insects at our third annual Insect Extravaganza at Robinson Nature Center, Sunday, July 13. For more information or to register visit howardcountymd.gov/robinsonnaturecenter.htm.

Sustainability Efforts in Park Zones



Each *Sustainabits* newsletter will feature a different Zone to highlight their sustainability efforts. Let's check out how the Rockburn Staff (Zone 4) has incorporated their own sustainability efforts into their everyday routine.

1. Lost items found within Zone 4 are kept in Lost & Found for 30 days. After that, the items are taken to a local church where the donations go to needy families.
2. Tennis balls and lacrosse balls are collected and donated for reuse.
3. Staff takes used paper from the recycle bin and cuts the paper into note size pieces for notes, phone messages, etc.
4. Majority of the staff packs their lunch every day. However when they do go out to get lunch, they carpool to cut down on carbon emissions.
5. Staff members have planted a vegetable garden to have fresh vegetables at lunch or to take home.
6. In the office area, many indoor plants can be found to improve indoor air quality.
7. Future plans include installing motion sensors on light switches to be sure lights will not be left on when not in use.

Ecological Footprint Quiz

A few years ago, the Sustainability asked that you take an ecological footprint quiz to assess the impact your lifestyle has on the environment. Have you lowered your footprint since then? Follow the link http://myfootprint.org/en/visitor_information/ to take another quiz and find out. This Ecological Footprint Quiz "estimates the area of land and ocean required to support your consumption of food, goods, services, housing, and energy and assimilate your wastes. Your ecological footprint is expressed in "global hectares" (gha) or "global acres" (ga), which are standardized units that take into account the differences in biological productivity of various ecosystems impacted by your consumption activities. Your footprint is broken down into four consumption categories: carbon (home energy use and transportation), food, housing, and goods and services. Your footprint is also broken down into four ecosystem types or biomes: cropland, pastureland, forestland, and marine fisheries."





Passport to Family Wellness is Sustainable

Launching in July during July Is Recreation & Parks Month, Wegmans, the Columbia Association and Howard County Recreation & Parks (HCRP) have partnered to create a "Wegmans Passport to Family Wellness" booklet. This pamphlet provides an opportunity to experience the outdoors and be active with friends and family while discovering some of the best parks and trails near Columbia. This passport gives a description of sixteen (16) trails located in Howard County.

Just take the Wegmans Passport with you and record your progress by using a pencil or crayon to make a rubbing of the trail marker (designated by a symbol on each map) located on each trail. Trail markers are mounted on 4X4 posts and are similar to the one illustrated on the back cover.

If you walk eight trails maintained by HCRP or eight trails maintained by Columbia Association, go to the respective agency for a free give away. Howard County Recreation & Parks will be giving out **reusable water bottles**.

All questers that complete the sixteen (16) trails will receive a Wegmans coupon redeemable for a free Wegmans product.

Questers who complete the sixteen (16) trails will be entered in raffles for a \$100 Wegmans Gift Card or Gift Certificate from HCRP or Columbia Association.



Community Center Sustainability

Efforts happening at North Laurel, Gary J. Arthur, and Roger Carter Community Centers

- Distributing reusable water bottles as July is Recreation & Parks Month giveaway.
- Opening and closing blinds throughout the building for improved cooling and energy efficiency.
- Using the natural light from longer summer days to reduce the number of lights turned on.

Additional Efforts happening at & Gary J. Arthur Community Centers:

- Recycling bins were being used so much that they upgraded to a recycling dumpster.
- Using rechargeable batteries for the restroom toilets' automatic flushing.

Roger Carter Community Center reduces disposable plastic bottle trash!

Water fountains were designed to allow for refilling of reusable water bottles which minimize disposable plastic bottle waste in the environment. In the first year of operation Roger Carter's guests helped save a total of 165,977 water bottles, over 100,000 saved in the pool area alone.



←Refill your
waterbottle here



Our Garden is Growing... Farmers' Market is coming in July

Thanks to the Health and Wellness Committee, there will soon be a delicious bounty of work-grown nutritious treats available for all. Our dedicated farmers planted a variety of tomatoes, sweet peppers, green peppers, hot peppers, zucchini, squash and herbs. Please keep your eyes "peeled" for the upcoming Farmers' Market where vegetables and fruits will be in the lobby until the end of the season, for staff to take home with them. Donations will be gladly accepted and will be used to fund future projects and initiatives. Special thanks to the Garden Crew for making this happen. We'll also welcome any homegrown veggies you have for the market. Thanks!

If you have any fruits or vegetables that you would like to donate to the Farmers' Market, please contact Anna Hunter at 410-313-4686 or ahunter@howardcountymd.gov.

